



Wildlands Update for January

General Recreation Notes

January is a good time to look for tracks of marten, fox, hare, and lynx on snow in forests and along streams. Remember if you take part in winter activities be prepared and carry extra clothing. Don't be a victim of hypothermia or frost-bite. To view the weather at your destination, check: <http://akweathercams.faa.gov/allcams.php>

Online Snow-Depth Gauges:

For current snow-depth information around the state, please go to <http://ambcs.org/SiteViewer.shtml>

Respect Winter Wildlife:

During winter, moose are actually starving to death at a controlled rate. Animals not only have to struggle with harsh weather and reduced food supplies; they also have to contend with increasing numbers of motorized outdoor enthusiasts. Remember, the energy and fat these animals are forced to burn could mean the difference in their surviving the winter. Wildlife harassment is against state law.

Road Closures

The Denali, Taylor, and Top of the World Highways are closed for the winter and most other highways are experiencing snowy or icy conditions. The Denali Park Road is closed at Mile 3. For updated road conditions throughout the state, visit <http://511.alaska.gov/> or dial 511 in Alaska, (866) 282-7577 outside Alaska.

Firewood Gathering

Chugach National Forest:

For firewood see http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach/news_releases/firewood.html

Alaska Department of Natural Resources:

See <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/forestry/divdir.htm> for your local contact. Both commercial and personal use firewood on state land requires a permit.

Alaska State Parks

2008 State Park passes are now available for \$40 each (or \$60 for two) day-use passes. Boat Launch passes cost \$75 each or \$100 for two. Passes are available on-line and at the AAPLIC, DNR Public Information Center, Potter Section House, REI, AMH, and Sportsman's Warehouse. Winter Trails Day is January 12th, all day-use parking fees will be waived. There will be festivities at Hatcher Pass. Check www.wintertrails.org

Chugach State Park:

Check the status of areas open to snowmachines by calling (907) 269-8400 and pressing extension "1" or visit <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/units/chugach/snowmach.htm>. Campgrounds are closed, but the cabins and yurts at Eklutna and Eagle River Nature Center remain open year-round. For current information, call (907) 345-5014 or go to <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/asp/chugachwinter.pdf>

Matsu Area State Parks:

Independence Mine / Hatcher Pass: There is no snowmachine use until the area receives at least 30" of snow to protect underlying vegetation. However there is enough snow cover to enjoy downhill skiing, snowboarding, x-country skiing and sledding. Beware of avalanche danger and carry beacons, shovels, and probes.

Nancy Lake State Recreation Area:

Cabins are open year-round. Snowmachining is closed due to lack of snow as of 12/28, but skiing is good. Watch for thin ice at inlets and outlets. For current information call (907) 495-6273.

Denali State Park:

Having received the 24-inch minimum snow cover, Denali State Park is now open to the use of snowmachines and other registered off-highway vehicles. Curry & Kesugi Ridge have less snow so tundra plants are at risk for damage. Veterans' Memorial is closed, but park cabins at Byers Lake remain open. For current snow and safety information in Matsu Area State Parks, call (907) 745-8950 or go to <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/asp/curevnts.htm>

Kenai Peninsula Parks:

Kachemak Bay:

Nomad Shelters will be operating two yurts this winter at Humpy Creek and Wright Beach. Call (907) 235-0132 for details. For general info, call (907) 262-5581.

Caines Head:

Thumb Cove and Callisto cabins remain open for rental; Derby Cove is closed for repairs until next May.

Some good websites

Alaska outdoor information:

<http://www.nps.gov/aplic>

Alaska weather information:

<http://www.arh.noaa.gov/>

Alaska Volcano Observatory :

<http://www.avo.alaska.edu/>

Sunrise-Sunset:

<http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/>

Road Conditions:

<http://www.dot.state.ak.us/>

Kenai River Area:

Try ice fishing on the lakes for rainbows, Dollies, and stocked landlocked salmon. Remember that travel on the ice is at your own risk. For ice and snow pack conditions, call Alaska State Parks in Soldotna at (907)262-5581 or the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge at (907)262-7021.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Check out the monthly publication Alaska Fish and Wildlife News at <http://www.wildlifeneews.alaska.gov/>

Bureau of Land Management

The Denali Highway is closed. Campgrounds in other areas remain open year-round, but there are no services of the outhouses. The Iditarod starts on Saturday, March 1st, at the corner of 4th and D in Anchorage.

National Park Service

Kenai Fjords National Park

The park remains open year-round, but all visitor centers are closed for the winter. Exit Glacier Road is closed to vehicle traffic at the first gate. ATVs are not allowed in the park, even on the road. With 40" of snow on the ground, Exit Glacier is open to snowmachine use; areas that are restricted are posted on bulletin boards and signs. The park is taking reservations for the Willow Public Use Cabin at Exit Glacier; reserve at (907) 224-7500, Monday-Friday 8:00a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or in-person at park headquarters in Seward. Visit the website at <http://www.nps.gov/kefj>

Denali National Park and Preserve

The Park Road is closed at Mile 3 (park headquarters). Bear Loop in Riley Creek Campground is open for the winter, but there is no water. A vault toilet is provided for campers and water can be obtained at the Murie Science and Learning Center located at Mile 1.3 on the park road, open from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. daily. The park offers free check-out of winter recreation gear. Doyon/ARAMARK, is now accepting advance reservations for shuttle buses and campgrounds for 2008. Reservations are available

by phone, on-line, mail, and fax. The Teklanika River Campground will be open to tents and RVs this year. For more information, visit the website at <http://www.nps.gov/dena> or call (907) 683-2294.

Fish and Wildlife Service

Kenai National Wildlife Refuge

The visitor center is open year-round except for holidays. There are thirteen public use cabins on the refuge. Snowmachine use is still restricted due to lack of snow. The ski trails are open and have been groomed. Hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. weekdays and 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. weekends. For more information, visit <http://kenai.fws.gov/>

National Forest Service

Chugach National Forest

The following areas have opened to motorized use: Turnagain Pass, the Lost Lake Area, Resurrection Pass, Johnson Pass, the Carter / Crescent area, and the Cooper Lake area. Campgrounds are now gated but campers are welcome to walk-in. Visitors must practice minimum impact. For more info, call the Glacier Ranger District (907) 783-3242 or the Seward Ranger District (907) 224-3374 <http://www.fs.fed.us/rio/chugach/>

Urban Public Lands

Municipality of Anchorage and the MatSu Borough

Anchorage Parks and Recreation Activity Guide and calendar are now available on-line at <http://www.muni.org/parks/> January 27th is the Buckets O'Fun Ice Festival on Goose Lake with ice-skating and a fire-on-ice event.

Southcentral Visitor Centers

Eagle River Nature Center

Located at mile 12 of Eagle River Road, ERNC is open Fridays and weekends 10a.m.-5:00p.m. Winter programs include birding, hiking, skiing, astronomy, and more. ERNC rents its facility, a cabin, two yurts, and snowshoes. Call for updates on the Crow Pass trail. Call (907) 694-2108 or check the web at <http://www.ernc.org>.

Campbell Creek Science Center

The visitor center is open Monday through Friday 7:30am-4pm. The

Fireside Chat series is Wednesday, January 23, at 7p.m. featuring "Porcupines," the most common wildlife species in Anchorage. The Astronomy Series is Thursday, January 10th, at 7:00 p.m. on "Understanding the Cosmos." Remember that February 16th is Winter Trails Day, a full day of fun winter activities. For more information, call (907) 267-1247 or check the web at <http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/sciencecenter.html>

Begich-Boggs Visitor Center

The visitor center has closed for the winter except for education programs. Call (907) 783-2326 for more information or visit the website at http://www.fs.fed.us/rio/chugach/chugach_pages/bbvc.html

Alaska Islands and Ocean Visitor Center

The visitor center is open Tuesday through Saturday, 12noon to 5 p.m., closed on holidays. Be sure to check out their Discovery Labs on Wednesdays 3-5p.m. and programs on weekends. For more information, call (907) 235-6961 or visit <http://www.islandsandoccean.org>

Alaska Public Lands Information Centers

The **Downtown Anchorage** location is open 10a.m.-5p.m. Monday-Friday, closed January 21st. Movies are available on request (if not previously scheduled by school classes). For more information, call (907) 644-3661 or 1-866-869-6887. Check the web at <http://www.nps.gov/aplic>

The **Fairbanks** location is open Tuesday-Saturday, 10:00a.m.-5:00p.m., closed January 19 for Martin Luther King Day. Explore Alaska Lecture Series takes place on Thursday evenings at 7:00 p.m. Call (907) 456-0527 for more information.

The **Tok Center** location is open Monday to Friday 8:00a.m.-4:30p.m. Call (907) 883-5667 for more information or (888) 256-6784 for Alaska Marine Highway reservations.

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nps photos